

Interpretive Plan Report



for

The Fort-to-Fort Trail

EcoLeaders



Interpretation
and
Environmental
Education

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2003
submitted to
Township of Langley
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Executive Summary

The Fort-to-Fort Trail is a 4.6 kilometre linear trail connecting the Fort Langley National Historic Site with the site of the original Fort Langley in Derby Reach Regional Park. Most of the trail parallels the south shore of the Fraser River, although there are some sections that pass through the town of Fort Langley or follow rural roads.

The main section of the trail was completed in September 2001 with a temporary section running along the edge parcel of property on the edge of the village of Fort Langley Interfor. When the Interfor property is developed, the final section of the Fort-to-Fort Trail will be built along Fraser River.

The Township of Langley Parks and Recreation Department contracted EcoLeaders Interpretation and Environmental Education to develop an interpretive plan for the trail and design 12-15 interpretive signs for the Fort-to-Fort Trail. This report is the interpretive plan and corresponding sign plan for the trail.

Interpretive Plan

The Interpretive Plan documents and analyzes what is known about the people who visit the park – how many come, when, how often they visit, how long they stay, why they come, and what they are interested in. The plan presents an inventory, itemizes and maps of the features along the trail. These features were interpreted, and analyzed in terms of interpretive value and risk of resource damage by visitors. Finally, a series of interpretive themes is identified that can be used by interpreters to develop programs that bring park visitors and park resources together.

Visitors

The Fort-to-Fort Trail is used steadily throughout the year. Most users are local people who return to the trail often, sometimes bringing first-time visitors with them (neighbours, out of town friends and relatives etc.). Most appear to access the trail from their homes along the trail or drive to Derby Reach Regional Park where they access the trail from a parking lot located next to an historical interpretive node that features the Houston House and the Karr/Mercer historic barn.

Other user groups include visitors to Fort Langley National Historic Site and tourist visiting the shops and museums in the village of Fort Langley.

The high proportion of repeat users of the trail indicate that interpretation needs to focus on developing observation skills of trail users throughout the year. This will ensure that the interpretive signs will continue to be relevant to repeat users.

Associated Facilities

The Fort-to-Fort Trail has the unusual benefit of being associated with other interpretive facilities and programs in the Fort Langley Area. These include:

- Fort Langley National Historic Site
- Langley Centennial Museum
- Derby Reach Regional Park
- Brae Island Regional Park
- Langley CN Station Museum
- BC Farm Machinery and Agricultural Museum

Site Inventory: What is There to Interpret?

A site inventory was conducted to identify issues and resources that may be interpreted. These resources consist of:

Human History/Cultural Features

- Prehistory
- First Nations
- First European Contact
- First European Settlement
- The Fraser Gold Rush
- Recent Developments

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Natural History Features

Natural Communities

- Fraser River
- Disturbance Zone
- Farmland
- Pond
- River Islands
- The Salmon River
- Old Field
- Riverside (Riparian) Vegetation
- Industrial Site
- Mixed Forest
- Derby Bluffs

Key Processes And Seasonal Events

Three key natural processes and seasonal events take place along the Fort-to-Fort Trail. Key points about these features are briefly summarized below:

- High Water
- Seasonal Blooms
- Migrations of fish and birds

Viewscapes

The Fort-to-Fort Trail offers several breath taking viewscapes that must be considered as features for the interpretive subjects. They include:

- The Fraser River
- Mount Baker
- Golden Ears

Resource/Visitor Management Concerns

Interpretation can be a powerful management tool. Visitors are much more willing to comply with regulations when they understand the need for them and the effects of non-compliance. Although pointing out the minor importance of the concerns, Langley Township and GVRD Parks staff have identified the following management issues related to the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

- Dogs Off Leash
- General Trail Etiquette
- Inappropriate Parking
- Stay on Trails

Interpretive Topics and Themes

Based on the research conducted, the following interpretive themes were developed:

Reading The Landscape

By observing and using the five senses, anyone can learn how the landscape was formed and how and why the natural communities along the Fort-to-Fort Trail reflect the area's physical conditions.

Tools For Observing

Using some simple observational techniques, anyone can increase their awareness, appreciation and understanding of the world of the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

The Importance of Water

The region's climate results in a dramatic seasonal changes in river levels that has a profound effect on the natural and human communities along the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

A Sense of Place

The Fort-to-Fort Trail is a comfortable place where people come repeatedly to recreate and enjoy the peace and beauty of this rare landscape.

A Land Steeped in History

The Fort-to-Fort Trail is located in one of BC's historic areas. People have been living here at least since the last ice age, making use of the land's abundant natural resources. There are many opportunities to learn about Fort Langley's rich past.

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Site Selection

The following sites for interpretive signs were selected:

Trail Heads

- Fort Langley National Historic Site
- CN Station*
- Derby Reach Regional Park

Interpretive Nodes

- Sources of Information
- Upland Forest
- Pond
- Salmon River Pumping Station (3 signs)
- Flood Plain Forest
- The Big River (2 signs)

Sign Design Options

Two sign design options were considered.

Standard Panel Design

A simple panel design is recommended. Each panel will be 28 inches wide by 15 inches high supported by one or two posts except at existing viewing platforms.

At all locations signs will be tilted at a 45 degree angle. Detailed drawings are included.

Book Design

A book design consisting of moveable 10 X 14 inches panels may be used at some sites.

Sign Media

The Scotch Print process is recommended. It is durable, affordable and can be produced locally. Alternative processes such as Folia and Duratec are also in common use.

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Introduction

Who Is This Interpretive Plan For?

This plan is aimed at Township of Langley planners who develop services and facilities featuring the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

What Is In This Plan?

Part 1: the Fort-to-Fort Trail General Interpretive Plan contains background including:

- information on the people who use the trail
- information on resources of the Fort-to-Fort Trail
- an analysis of site visitors and resources
- suggested interpretive themes for the Fort-to-Fort Trail

Part 2: Interpretive Signs contains details ideas for the development of an interpretive sign system for the Fort-to-Fort Trail. The plan consists of ideas and recommendations for:

- storylines that join the signs together
- interpretive themes
- communication objectives for trail signs
- main points for each sign
- trail design
- design of interpretive nodes
- location of interpretive nodes
- design of signs
- graphic design of sign panels
- funding and maintenance

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How Can This Interpretive Plan Be Used?

The process of awareness, appreciation and understanding among trail users will be facilitated by this interpretive plan. This document can be used to develop interpretive trail signs—its primary function— and also develop other interpretive programs such as guided hikes, roving naturalists, interpretive stations along the trail, and presentations at the adjacent facilities like Fort Langley National Heritage Site and Derby Reach Regional Park. The main function will be to assist in the enhancement of visitor experiences when they visit the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

Interpretive planning is an on-going process. As time passes, new information and trends develop in visitation, and more information on the nature and history of the site becomes available. It is hoped that this interpretive plan will be a working document where interpreters and planners can add new information as it becomes available.

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Interpretive Plan

Philosophical Foundations

Interpretation: What is it?

Freeman Tilden, the godfather of interpretation in North America, defines interpretation as:

“... an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience and by illustrative media, rather than to simply communicate factual information.” (Freeman Tilden, Interpreting Our Heritage. 1957)

Here, Tilden has identified the key points that we follow in interpretation:

- interpretation reveals meaning
- interpretation requires people to interact with real objects, historic sites and landscapes, plants, animals and habitats
- interpretation is more than the simple communication of facts

Key Implication of this Definition

The Fort-to-Fort signs must relate to the people that visit the trail in a direct manner and address things that they can see, feel, touch, and smell on the very spot that the sign is located. The interpretation must be designed to provoke them to observe and think about the environment that they are encountering. Therefore, the selection of sites and placement of signs is a crucial part of this interpretive plan.

Interpretation will concentrate on natural and cultural history features that visitors will encounter or observe along the trail. The messages will also include, when practical, regional context as well as prehistory themes.

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Part 1

Fort-to-Fort Trail Interpretive Plan

Goals of the Interpretive Plan

1. Integrate interpretation on the Fort-to-Fort Trail with the interpretive services provided by:
 - the Fort Langley National Historic Site, located at the eastern terminus of the trail
 - Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) Parks–East Area at Derby Reach Regional Park, located at the western terminus of the trail
 - the Langley Centennial Museum located in the village of Fort Langley
 - other heritage tourism facilities in Fort Langley including the CN Train Station and the Langley Farm Machinery and Agricultural Museum
2. Identify and analyze
 - the visitors using the site in the past and trends for the future
 - the site resources available for interpretation
3. Using the information gathered, develop a suite of interpretive themes and messages about the natural and cultural heritage of the Fort-to-Fort Trail.
4. Develop a series of interpretive signs located along the Fort-to-Fort Trail that create awareness, appreciation and understanding among users of the trail.

Overall Objectives of the Interpretive Signs

After interacting with the interpretive signs along the Fort-to-Fort Trail the visitors will:

- learn and develop skills that will assist in increasing their enjoyment and understanding of local natural and cultural history
- wish to return to the trail to continue their observation and learning about the area's natural and cultural heritage
- be aware of and make use of local cultural history service providers
- follow general trail etiquette and resource management guidelines

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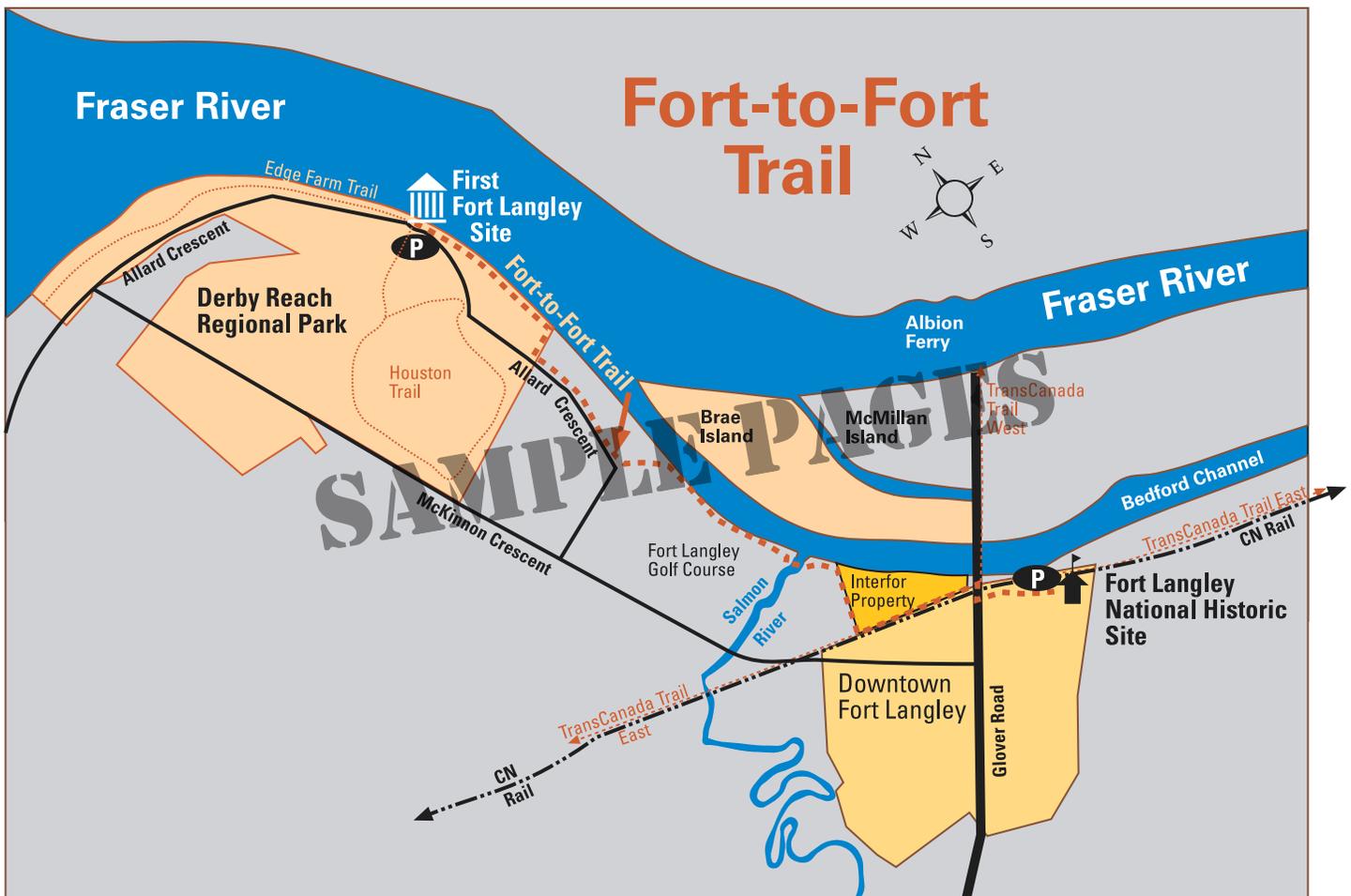
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The Study Area

The Fort-to-Fort Trail is a 4.6 kilometre linear trail connecting the Fort Langley National Historic Site with the site of the original Fort Langley in Derby Reach Regional Park. Most of the trail parallels the south shore of the Fraser River, although there are some sections that pass through the town of Fort Langley or follow rural roads.

The Fort-to-Fort Trail was completed in September 2001.

This interpretive plan covers only the lands that the Fort-to-Fort Trail passes through. However, for context, aspects of Derby Reach Regional Park, Fort Langley National Historic Site and other heritage preservation institutions in the village of Fort Langley are referred to as well.



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Section 1

Visitor Analysis: *Who Is This Trail For?*

Introduction

For an interpretive trail, it is vital to know who the users are and to identify their needs and interests. A visitor analysis identifies:

- Who will use interpretive products?
- What are they doing while on the trail?
- What are their interests?
- How often do they use the trail?

Methods

It has not been possible to conduct an extensive formal study because of budget and time constraints. Existing information on current and potential trail users was gathered from:

- the Fort Langley National Historic Site's Management Plan (1995)
- Fort Langley National Historic Site 1998 Visitor Survey
- personal communication with Bryan Jackson, Manager Heritage Programs, Fort Langley National Historic Site
- personal communication with Craig Smith, Operations Manager at Derby Reach Regional Park, and Rob Keip, Visitor Services Coordinator, GVRD Parks–East Area
- the Village of Fort Langley Heritage Tourism Study, published in 2002 by the Langley Centennial Museum
- informal observation of trail users on a single week day and on one day on a weekend

Note that almost all of the information used here is from sources outside the Fort-to-Fort Trail. Information was in two forms; anecdotal and formal.

Anecdotal information was gathered through talks with Township of Langley, GVRD Parks and Fort Langley NHS field staff. Formal information was gathered from reports on visitor characteristics that use scientifically rigorous methods and provided accurate information.

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Results

Applying Information from Other Sources to the Fort-to-Fort Trail

There were significant differences between the information about visitors to Fort Langley NHS, the Village of Fort Langley and Derby Reach Regional Park.

Key Differences	Fort Langley NHS	Fort Langley Village	Derby Reach Regional Park
Percent Return Visitors	Low	High	Very High
Where They Come From			
Outside BC	High (51%)	Low	Low
Lower Mainland	Medium (27%)	Medium	Low/medium
Local	Low	High	High
Education Levels	High	Unknown	Medium/high

Applying This Information to the Fort-to-Fort Trail

Visitor information from Derby Reach Regional Park was assessed as most useful for two reasons. The first is similar activities—users of the park facilities are in the park to walk, run, cycle and enjoy nature, as one would expect users of the Fort-to-Fort Trail to be.

The second reason is that at present and for long into the future, more Fort-to-Fort Trail users can be expected to originate from the Derby Reach end of the trail because of ease of access and because there are fewer distractions to draw people away from the trail.

Ease of Access

- the Derby Reach trails are connected to the Fort-to-Fort Trail and users are more likely to simply continue onto the Fort-to-Fort Trail from the park trails
- there is a parking lot adjacent to the Derby Reach trail head
- the trail head at Fort Langley NHS is not easily seen by visitors entering or leaving the Visitor Centre
- Most visitors to the Fort will not know of the existence of the Fort-to-Fort Trail and will not be prepared for a fairly long walk—it is not the focus of their visit

Fewer Distractions

- The village of Fort Langley has several other heritage tourism attractions e.g., the Centennial Museum, and there are numerous attractive shops and restaurants. A high proportion of Fort visitors will be drawn to these attractions rather than to the trail

Visual Appeal of the Trail

- the trail head area at Derby Reach is clear and appealing, and it will draw visitors down the trail
- the trail head area and eastern section of the trail at the Fort Langley end is not clear and the section through the Interfor property is visually unappealing (it will be several years before the Interfor property is redeveloped and the trail shifted to a more scenic route)

It must be noted that Fort Langley National Historic Site is planning to focus on attracting local repeat visitors, particularly families. This may include encouraging visitors to take a trip down the Fort-to-Fort Trail. If this is successful, we would expect to see more local families accessing the trail from the Fort parking lot.

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Also, the village of Fort Langley is planning to encourage their visitors to use Fort-to-Fort Trail as a means of prolonging their stay in the area. To this end, we will include some general recommendations as to trail heads.

1. Who Uses The Fort-To-Fort Trail?

The following list of users is based on our research:

- adults (ages 25-60)—single and small groups (1–5)
- parents with children, often with at least one child in a stroller
- extended families, often including children, parents and grandparents
- senior's walking groups
- seniors—individuals and small groups
- pre-teens—single and small groups (1–5)

Of the groups identified here, adults and parents with children are expected to be the heaviest users of the trail. At present, there is not enough information to rank the other user groups use the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

2. What Do They Do?

Most of the information about current activities comes from personal communication with GVRD park staff. The following is a listing in order of levels of use:

- Walk
- Walk Dogs
- Run
- Ride Bicycles
- Fishing

Sport fishing is a small but significant activity. In the past it was one of the main activities at Derby Reach Regional Park, however it is now much reduced with hiking and cycling being the park's main activities. A small number of fishers do access the Fraser from the Fort-to-Fort Trail this is of some concern with regard to bank erosion and fisher safety

- Enjoying Nature
bird watching, talking with friends in a natural setting, looking at scenery are expected to be important as well (see Why Do They Come? below)

3. Return Users/New Visitors?

A large portion of the present and potential visitors are local people who return often. Many use the trails as part of their daily routines, e.g., walk the dog at least once a day, and walk, run, or cycle the trail several times per week as part of an exercise routine. Others come several times a year or more often as part of a family cycling outing.

The *Village of Fort Langley Heritage Tourism Report* indicates that a large proportion of town site visitors return often. This is a large group of potential trail users.

4. How Long Do They Stay?

We estimate that the average trail user stays on the trail for one and one-half to four hours.

5. Where Do They Come From?

The majority of trail users are neighbours who live near the trail. They come from

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Analysis of Audience Information

The use to the Fort-to-Fort Trail seems to be spread throughout the year. Peaks occur in the summer and are especially high during special events held at Derby Reach Regional Park and Fort Langley National Historic Site.

The majority of users come from nearby and a large proportion are return users, many of whom, such as joggers and dog walkers, return often.

It is likely that many are well educated and that many will have some basic knowledge about the area's history and natural history.

Primary Audience

The main audience for interacting with these interpretive signs will be local residents who use the trail as a regular recreation area.

Trail Users

- Adults
 - Recreators
 - taking a stroll or bicycle for exercise and enjoyment
 - taking dog for a walk
 - taking visiting friends and family for a stroll to show off the landscape and community
- Family Groups
 - Weekdays
 - parent(s) and preschoolers on an outing
 - usually walking
 - Weekends and Holidays
 - at least one parent with one or more child
 - activities include cycling, wildlife watching and enjoying views
- Teens and Pre-teens
 - usually in small groups of friends
 - on way to village or to visit friends

Background of Trail Users

The people using the trail reflect the general composition of the surrounding communities. Key characteristics include:

- above provincial average education
- the demographics are unusual
 - much less cosmopolitan than the average
 - a large majority are Euro-Canadians

Interest in the Natural and Cultural Heritage

- broad spectrum
 - many will have participated in heritage and natural history programs provided by the many local heritage interpretation providers and have a deep appreciation and understanding
 - many have not participated and have only a rudimentary understanding of local historic and natural topics

Seasonal Use of the Fort-to-Fort Trail

- the trail gets year-round use
- heaviest use is likely summer
- fall and spring get strong use, especially on sunny weekends
- winter likely gets least use

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Section 2

Facilities and Interpretive Media Inventory

The Fort-to-Fort Trail has the unusual benefit of being associated with other interpretive facilities and programs in the Fort Langley Area.

Fort Langley National Historic Site

The Fort, open year-round, is located immediately beside the eastern trailhead of the Fort-to-Fort Trail. The focus of the Fort's programs is on the history of Fort Langley from its founding in 1827 through to its decline after the founding of the colony of British Columbia in 1858. Interpretive services includes a visitor centre, exhibits, a restored fort and buildings plus, living history, and special event.

Site staff have indicated that some of their visitors use the trail after their visit to the Fort.

The location of the Fort adjacent to the trail provides a great opportunity to integrate messages and experiences. For example, one of the messages delivered at the Fort is that the Fraser River was and remains an important transportation corridor. People walking the trail will be able to see present traffic on and along the river and to imagine how this landscape looked in the time of the Hudson Bay Company.

Langley Centennial Museum

The Museum, open year round, is located several hundred metres from the Fort Langley Trailhead of the Fort-to-Fort Trail. The Centennial Museum focuses on Langley's history and prehistory with exhibits on first nations peoples and the European settlers of this area.

The museum also provides special events and school programs based on historical themes. It is close to the Fort end of the Fort-to-Fort Trail. The free admission makes this an ideal place for Fort-to-Fort Trail hikers to drop into to ask questions that they developed along the trail or to follow up on stimulated interests.

Langley CN Station Museum

This museum is run by volunteers from the Langley Heritage Society and is located approximately 500 meters along the Fort-to-Fort Trail from the Fort trailhead, in the town of Fort Langley, adjacent to the CN Railway tracks. This small museum features exhibits and a small selection of rolling stock from the early to mid-1900s.

The museum's transportation theme could have connections with the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

BC Farm Machinery and Agricultural Museum

The farm museum specializes in old farm machinery. It is closed in the winter.

The museum has limited connections with the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

Derby Reach Regional Park

This park is part of GVRD Parks-East Area. The first 1 km section of the Fort-to-Fort Trail passes through the eastern edge of Derby Reach Regional Park. The park also contains several multi-use trails that join the Fort-to-Fort Trail at its western trailhead. Many trail users see these trails as logical continuations of each other. The park and trails have many regular users who also take part in special events. As well, the park has a heritage node adjacent to the western trailhead of the Fort-

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Section 3

Research and Topic Selection

Site Inventory: What is There to Interpret?

Introduction

A site inventory identifies issues and resources that may be interpreted. These resources consist of:

- Human History/Cultural Features
- Natural History Features
- Resource/Visitor Management Concerns

The features identified in the site inventory need not all be interpreted in any one interpretive project. Rather, the items described can be considered as a catalogue of features to be chosen from to create an effective interpretive experience.

Methods

Information was gathered from documents on the trail and adjacent lands. The following resources were used:

- 11 x 17 reductions Fort-to-Fort Trail survey of Phase 1, Phase 2&3
- 11 x 17 reductions of Derby Reach Regional Park interpretive signs
- The Kwantlen and Brae Island: An ethnographical and Oral Historical Account
- Fort Langley National Historic Site (info downloaded from website)
- Derby Reach to Fort Langley Trail: A Report submitted by Sharp And Diamond Landscape Architecture, March 1993
- Milner: The evolution of a Cultural Landscape.
- Excerpts from the Proposed Recreation Plan for the Fraser River Estuary
- Derby Reach Management Plan May 1999
- Heritage Resource Analysis & Interpretive Plan August 2001
- Archeological Overview Assessment of Milner and the Hudson's Bay Company Farm
- Environmental Inventory and Evaluation of Brae Island Regional Park 1999
- Excerpts from the Fraser River Estuary Proposed Recreation Plan 1990
- Derby Reach to Fort Langley Trail Study draft report 1993
- Various internet sites were also visited for detailed natural history information
- Derby Reach Biophysical Addendum
- Other documents, photos and pages provided by various contacts
- Four visits to the Fort-to-Fort Trail were made by the consultants to access the features on the ground

Results

A. Human History

The human history of the Fort Langley area has been researched more thoroughly than in most areas in BC. Early human settlement from prehistory to first European contact is covered by the Langley Centennial Museum. Early European history is covered jointly by the Centennial Museum, Fort Langley Historic Site, and Derby Reach Regional Park.

The following information summaries do not cover historic events in great detail.

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B. Natural History

Natural Communities

Fraser River

The Fraser River is one of the world's great rivers. It dominates the landscape. It acts as a conveyor belt transporting mud, sand, gravel and rocks eroded from the surrounding mountains upstream. This material is deposited in a vast delta that has grown immensely. Ten thousand years ago, the river mouth was at New Westminster. The river's fast flowing current, seasonal fluctuations in level (highest in June and early July, lowest before the fall rains begin), and occasional catastrophic floods (highest on records occurred in 1894, others of importance occurred in 1948, 1950, 1964, and 1972) have, until recent times, moved the river bed back and forth over the flood plain. Evidence of this large scale movement can be seen in the nearby Salmon River basin, much of which is the bed of an ancient ox-bow lake formed from an old section of the Fraser River. Today, smaller-scale but still impressive evidence of the river's power to change landscapes can be seen in the significant annual erosion of Derby Bluffs, the sand deposition on the edgewater bar just north of the Derby Reach Trailhead, and the quantities of sediment carried in the river's dark waters.

The river is also a travelway for many fish and birds. It is Canada's most important salmon river hosting millions of adult salmon migrating upstream to spawn and even larger numbers of juveniles swimming downstream to the sea. Many species of migrating birds follow the river corridor to travel on their seasonal journeys.

The river is home to many other species of fish (including the white sturgeon), bird, mammals and other life.

River Islands

Brae Island is located just across the narrow Bedford Channel from the central section of the trail. The island is made up of river-born sediments and is continually being changed by river erosion and deposition. The forest that covers much of the island is flood plain forest mostly red alder and black cottonwood. This forest is typical of landscapes that are disturbed by occasional inundations of high water.

Town site

Approximately the first kilometre of the eastern end of the trail passes through the village of Fort Langley. The route follows Mavis Road west across Glover Road to the CN Station, and jogs north along Glover to cross the CN tracks. The natural landscape of this section is limited to lawns and residential lots beside the upper (eastern) section of Mavis Road. Further down, the trail passes through part of the paved downtown section of Fort Langley.

Industrial Site

This section runs from Glover road between the CN tracks on the west and the Interfor Mill (the historic McMillan Cedar Mill) to the east. At present, the trail is narrow and is bordered on both sides by chain-link fence topped with barbed wire.

Vegetation is sparse with a few non-native pioneer invasive plants such as scotch broom softening the edges of large expanses of pavement and buildings under demolition. The old McMillan Cedar Mill site is in the process of being decommissioned. This land is slated for residential development, and the trail route will be changed.

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diving ducks. There are also several ponds along Allard Crescent. One of these has a beaver lodge and a dam on it. It may be possible for visitors to observe beaver activity in the morning and evening from the trail.

Key Processes And Seasonal Events

Three key natural processes and seasonal events take place along the Fort-to-Fort Trail. Key points about these features are briefly summarized below:

- High Water
 - high water on the Fraser occurs in June and early July when the snow in the mountains of the upper Fraser basin melt
 - this is part of the natural pulse of the river, which shapes not only local areas of the river (e.g., eroding Derby Bluff), but is responsible for shaping the huge Fraser delta and sending the huge billows of silt and nutrient laden fresh water into the Georgia Strait (the Fraser Plume)
 - evidence of past high water can be observed
 - flood suppression over the last 100 years has resulted in changes in structure, vegetation and ecology of the lower Fraser
- Seasonal Blooms
 - spring flowers can provide attractive displays
- Migrations
 - the Fraser is a wildlife migration corridor
 - Salmon
 - the west coast's biggest salmon run goes up this river
 - watch for fishing activity on the river for signs when the runs occur
 - Water Birds
 - the Fraser is a spring and summer highway for many species of birds such as ducks and loon that spend their summers in the interior and north of Canada and spend their winters in coastal BC waters

These processes or their effects are key, observable phenomena that should be considered when developing interpretive programs for the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

Viewscapes

The Fort-to-Fort Trail offers several breath taking viewscapes that must be considered as features for the interpretive subjects. They include:

The Fraser River



The Fort-to-Fort Trail provides several spectacular views of the Fraser. The Fraser is one of the world's great rivers, comparable in power and importance with the St. Lawrence, the Nile, and the Mississippi. It drains an enormous amount of land, has vast amounts of water in and carves and shapes the landscape. It has an enormous ecological impact on the biosphere and commercial value and impact on people that live near it.

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Mount Baker



This tall, sleeping volcano dominates some of the southern views from the trail. Its story as part of the Pacific Ring of Fire, and the part volcanos play in the formation of the coastal mountain range in BC and the US can be told.

Golden Ears



This mountain dominates views to the northeast. It sits on the north edge of the Fraser flood plain. The view represents the steep mountains that dominate the Fraser Basin further north and east. It is from steep-snow covered mountains like this that the water, mud, gravel and nutrients of the lower Fraser come.

D. Management Concerns

Interpretation can be a powerful management tool. Visitors are much more willing to comply with regulations when they understand the need for them and the effects of non-compliance. Although pointing out the minor importance of the concerns, Langley Township and GVRD Parks staff have identified the following management issues related to the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

Dogs Off Leash

Staff indicate that a major concern on the Fort-to-Fort Trail, as well as the other trails in Derby Reach Regional Park is dog control. Inappropriate interactions of dogs with each other, hikers, runners and cyclists and damage to sensitive riparian habitat was indicated as the major problem on the trail. Trail rules are posted at trail heads and other places, but, many dog owners do not comply. Derby Reach does have a dogs-off-leash area on the western edge of the park.

Inappropriate Parking

There are parking lots at both ends of the trail. Problems occur at other access points along the trail where trail users park their cars in or across private driveways, or along streets in unsafe locations. As well, during special events at Derby Reach Regional Park, the small parking lot at the western trailhead is quickly filled and people park their cars along Allard Crescent causing congestion and endangering other people getting in and out of their parked cars.

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General Trail Etiquette

Most trail users appear to be courteous and have no wish to annoy or endanger other trail users. However, many appear to be unaware of the general rules of the road for trail users, such as, make room for people passing from behind, and when you stop, stand on the edge of the trail to allow others to pass by.

Stay on Trails

Staff indicate that many trail users do not appear to be aware of the need to stay on trails to prevent trampling of delicate plants and reduce bank erosion. At present the major safety issues along the Derby Bluff section of the trail is well addressed by a series of warning signs. .

Topic Selection

Topics

Interpretive and educational topics generally refer to broad areas of interest that can be described in a single word or short phrase.

The selection of topics is based on the information gathered from visitor analysis (visitor interests) and site inventory. Topics generally cover several themes.

The following four topics were selected.

- Recreation: Reading the Landscape
- Flora and Fauna of the Fraser Valley
- Industrial History
- Settlement History

SAMPLE PAGES

4. Interpretive Themes: The Big Ideas

Themes

Themes outline the main ideas that will be interpreted. A theme is usually expressed in a single sentence or paragraph.

Themes are used as a guideline for selecting the messages to be communicated. They can be considered as the big ideas or key concepts that visitors should understand after participating in an interpretive program or visiting an interpretive site. Themes are the conceptual outline for the topics that will be interpreted. Themes are developed before the interpretive locations and key points to be communicated are finally selected for a trail sign system.

Using themes helps avoid the problem of diverting a visitor's attention here and there with no big insights or ideas to reward and support them. Themes provide the big picture needed to make all the messages and activities meaningful. With all the components of an interpretive program, exhibit or sign package working together on the same set of themes, the interpretation is afforded a cohesive, powerful punch.

The proposed themes for interpreting the Fort-to-Fort Trail are listed below. As well as being used for this trail sign system, these themes could also be used for on-trail programs led by a guide, a brochure or any other personal or non-personal program developed by staff or volunteers.

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Interpretation
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Interpretive Plan

Reading The Landscape

By observing and using the five senses, anyone can learn how the landscape was formed and how and why the natural communities along the Fort-to-Fort Trail reflect the area's physical conditions.

Tools For Observing

Using some simple observational techniques, anyone can increase their awareness, appreciation and understanding of the world of the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

The Importance of Water

The region's climate results in a dramatic seasonal changes in river levels that has a profound effect on the natural and human communities along the Fort-to-Fort Trail.

A Sense of Place

The Fort-to-Fort Trail is a comfortable place where people come repeatedly to recreate and enjoy the peace and beauty of this rare landscape.

A Land Steeped in History

The Fort-to-Fort Trail is located in one of BC's historic areas. People have been living here at least since the last ice age, making use of the land's abundant natural resources. There are many opportunities to learn about Fort Langley's rich past.

5. Storyline

The storyline for the trails signs will focus on a visitor character who explores the Fort-to-Fort Trail, learning and growing over many visits.

A key feature of the users of the Fort-to-Fort Trail is that a large percent of these people are repeat visitors who live close to the site. To be attractive to this group as well as first-time visitors, the trail signs must tell more than just facts of the special features along the trail. The signs must provoke new discoveries, new ways of looking at familiar experiences and repeat visits to the trail. The signs should relate and reveal ways that visitors can observe landscapes, the plants and animals they encounter along the trail and promote good practices in interacting with the trail resources that are safe for visitors and the land.

One key way to communicate these interpretive principles is to model them. EcoLeaders recommends that the trail signs be written in a narrative format—in the form of the pages of a nature diary or notebook. The diary writer could exhibit good practices in trail etiquette, pose questions and make discoveries that lead trail users through discovery activities, and identify key sources of information, such as, the Fort and the Museum, and encourage users to make further discoveries along the trails of Derby Reach Regional Park.

6. Site Selection

A total of 19 sign sites (4 trailhead plus 15 interpretive signs) have been identified, although the present contract provides funding for a maximum of 12-15 signs. We have indicated the 12 priority signs with asterisks (*). Details about the additional sign sites have been provided so that, in the future, when funds become available, they may be developed to round out the interpretive messages of the Fort-to-Fort Trail.



Interpretive Plan

Interpretive Signs

Information Format

The sign rough content is recorded here for use in the context of the story line. It is written from the context of notes from an ideal trail user who often revisits the trail. This person makes observations and asks questions about what she/he sees. The questions may or may not be answered.

Rough content for each sign is recorded as follows:

Title

- a working title for the sign that briefly describes core message

Location

- a brief description of the location for the sign (often with a photo)

Questions

- a set of questions that the character writing the signs is likely to have at this site

Key Points

- information that can be included in the sign's messages

Distribution of the signs along the trail, titles, questions and key points may all be modified as writing and development progresses. Signs are presented in order from Fort Langley to Derby Reach Regional Park. In reality, the signs will stand alone and not need to be part of a linear experience. Most walkers may in fact experience the trail starting from the park end.

Rough Content

1. Sources of Information – Village of Fort Langley*

Location:

Part way down Mavis Road, with clear view of the Centennial Museum and the Agricultural Museum.

Key Points

- Fort Langley has an abundance of historic resources
 - Fort Langley National Historic Site
 - a great place to see how the first settlers partnered with first nations to develop a peaceful trade in furs and fish
 - Langley Centennial Museum
 - the place to learn about first nations and pioneer life
 - BC Farm Machinery and Agricultural Museum
 - see how farming technology has changed over the years
 - CN Station
 - see some of the old train cars that helped open this country

2. Mill Waterfront

This location will become available when development of the Interfor property takes place.

- buildings and artifacts planned for proposed trail section are: Pump house, Boom Gear Hoist Frame, Band Mill and Hydraulic Barker

Other information that could be included

- Muench trail (now Allard Crescent) used to run through this area connecting Fort Langley with series of farms along Allard Crescent, perhaps all the way to Muench Bar in the west end Derby Reach Park
- 1925 a New West company started a tie mill (railroad ties?), then later lumber, when supplied timbers for first bridge across Bedford Channel (Jacob Haldi)

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5.b. Signs of Changing Water Levels*

Key Points

Questions

- Does the level of the Fraser change?
- When and why?

Tides in a River?

- although we are 50 km (30 miles) upstream from the river mouth, tides still occur on the river

Indicators include

- mud flats on edge of the river
- dramatic changes in water level over the day

Flood Waters

Indicators include

- dykes
 - observations in June
 - riverside vegetation is adapted to flood waters
(we suggest installing a water gauge on the adjacent piling that shows regular flood levels record highs of past floods)
 - flood detritus lodged in branches of riverside shrubs
- Ocean-going sailing vessels anchored in Bedford Channel near here at the 2nd Fort and at Derby where there are deep anchorage yards from shore



5.c. The Salmon River through Time*

Key Points

Questions

- What was this place like before the fur traders came here?
- What was it like during the fur trade heydays?
- Where can I find answers to these questions?

- the historic first nations short-cut travel route to salmon fishing grounds came up Nicomekl River from Boundary Bay, short portage to join Salmon River to get to Fraser Canyon Salmon catching, processing areas plus trade and visiting: short cut, avoid Musqueam and other hostile people
- old water route later became Smuggler's Trail during goldrush days
- people from Vancouver Island (Cowichan?) had a salmon weir near mouth of Salmon R. when fur traders arrived to 1820s
- small building used for curing and storing salmon was built and used by 2nd Fort, west side of Salmon River near current site of pump
- bridge over Salmon River at mouth, trout fishing popular in 1920s
- to learn more about the history of the Salmon River drop into the Langley Centennial Museum and Fort Langley National Historic Site
- to become involved with the preservation and study of the Salmon River contact the Salmon River Enhancement Society

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8. Upland Forest

Location:

This is probably the highest point on the trail. The site is located on a bend in the trail between a mature Grand Fir and large Western Red Cedar.

Key Points

What is different about this forest?

Why is it different?

Is this like the forest that was here before the coming of the Europeans?

- big trees - grand fir, cottonwood
- very mossy understory lots of sword fern
- quietest part of trail, sound of civilization buffered by trees
- a great place to observe wildlife
 - nesting birds in spring summer
 - birds and mammals come here for shelter from cold winds in winter

9. Big River (2 signs)*



Location:

This site is located on grassy knoll above a sharp bend in the trail where it meets the shore of the Fraser River. The height of land provides an excellent view of the river in winter and is a comfortably safe distance from the actively eroding bank of the Fraser. If this site is to be used, it would require a short (5 metre) spur access trail up to the top of the hill and pruning or removal of some young alders along the top of the bank.

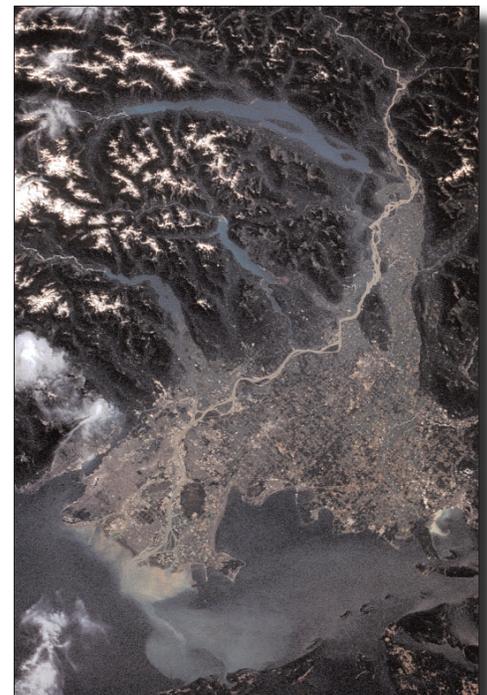
Key Points

What is happening here?

Where does all the soil eroded here go?

Why is the river so big here?

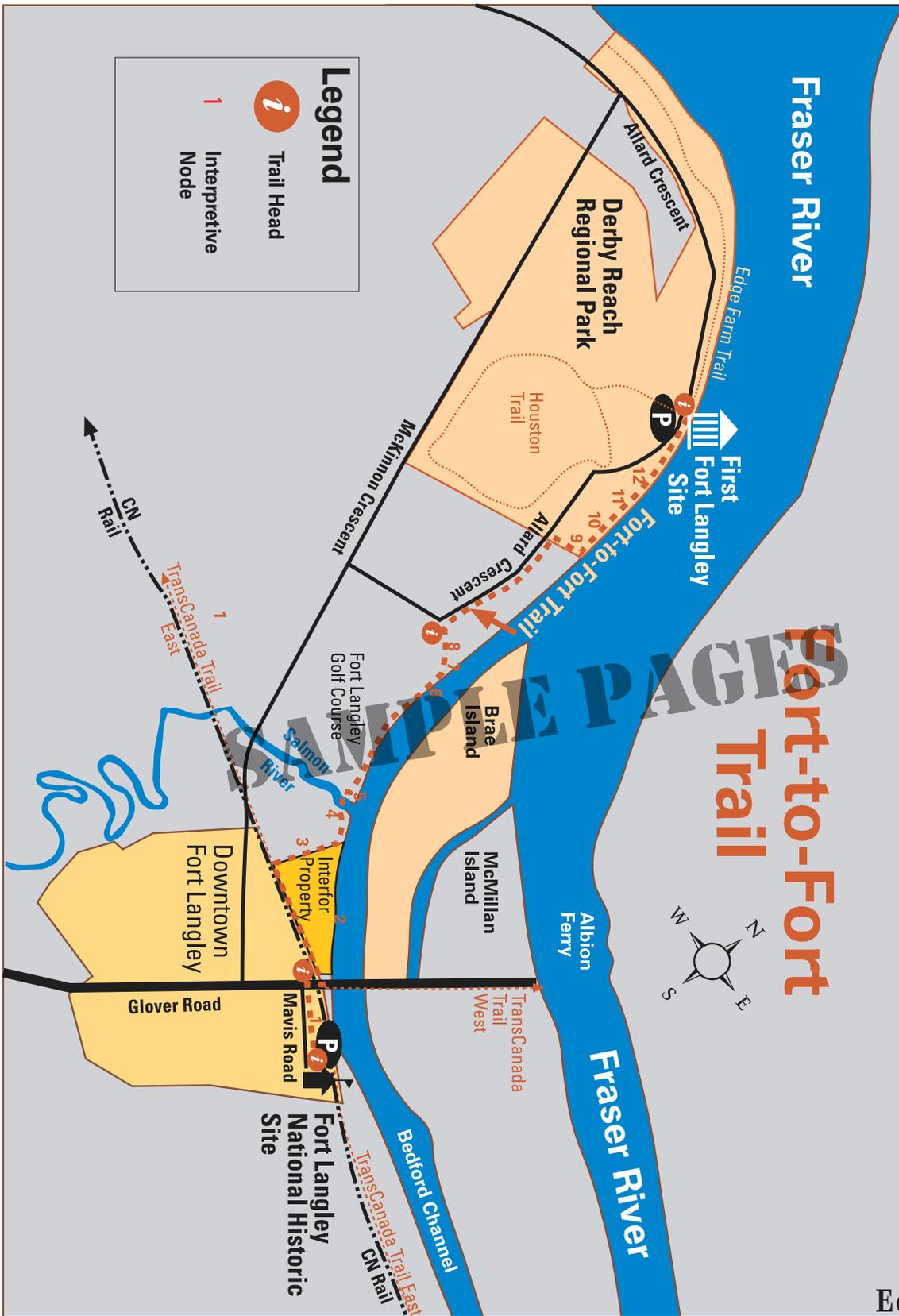
- the Fraser River is one of the world's great rivers
 - 1,325 kilometres long
 - drains over 200,000 square kilometres of BC
 - its sources are the steep mountains of the interior where melting snow cascades down the steep slopes picking up gravel, sand and mud which is carried down stream in its dark waters
- Fraser Valley is a natural artery for BC Industry
 - shipping route from ocean deep into the rich heartland
 - punching through of the railway from eastern Canada to the mouth of the Fraser in 1885 made Vancouver an important port on the Pacific Ocean
 - first as a trickle and then in a flood, people arrived in British Columbia to spread through the valley of the Fraser and its tributaries



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